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Robert Wechsler-Reya, Ph.D., has accepted a position as professor and director of the Tumor Development Program at Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, becoming the first CIRM Research Leadership Award recipient.

The agency's governing board approved the \$5.9 million award in April, 2010 to be used as part of a package to recruit Wechsler-Reya from Duke University to Sanford-Burnham. The press release announcing that decision is available [here](#).

"The national and international leaders in stem cell biology who we recruit with these Leadership awards will ensure that California has the expertise needed to drive the creation of innovative therapies for patients suffering from a chronic disease or injury," said Robert Klein, chair of the CIRM Governing Board, at the time of the award. "Bringing this caliber of scientist to California also creates high paying positions to staff the labs, providing new jobs and tax revenue to the state.

The research Leadership Awards are intended to recruit early to mid-career stem cell scientists to California institutions by permitting the recipients to pursue high-risk, high payoff, innovative studies that could not be adequately supported by other sources. The award cycle will repeat quarterly.

In a press release announcing Wechsler-Reya's new position, Kristiina Vuori, M.D., Ph.D., Sanford-Burnham President and Pauline and Stanley Foster Presidential Chair said, "Dr. Wechsler-Reya is an outstanding investigator who has made great contributions to our understanding of disease. He will be an enormous asset for our Cancer Center, as well as the Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine."

- [Read the Sanford-Burnham press release](#)

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